CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM · LUCHA POR EL COMUNISMO · PLP

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

Volume 56 No. 5 | February 28 2024 | Suggested Donation $1

DC:

NO GENOCIDE IN PALESTINE!

End the genocide! No war but communist revolution

Washington DC, February 10—"Teachers draw the line, No genocide in Palestine" rang out at the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) headquarters as over 50 teachers and supporters demanded a cease-fire in Gaza. We marched past the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the U.S.-based mouthpiece of Zionism, condemning their fascist support for the murder of tens of thousands of Palestinians. After two miles of marching, we arrived at the headquarters of the National Education Association (NEA) for a final rally. Progressive Labor Party (PLP) teachers and others spoke with marchers and distributed over 30 CHALLENGEs and 70 anti-imperialist communist leaflets to bring a revolutionary message to the assembled workers. We challenged the reformist slogan of "No endorsement for Biden without a cease-fire." Only armed struggle and revolutionary communism to crush capitalism can bring liberation to Palestine/Israel, not a U.S. election. The U.S. capitalist empire backs Israeli fascism 100 percent to guarantee U.S. control of oil, pipelines, and sea routes and to sustain a military presence in the Middle East. This will not change, no matter who is president.

Educators give lessons in anti-fascism

PLP teachers and supporters insist that opponents of fascism and genocide in the Middle East must also fight fascist attacks in the U.S. by defending embattled anti-Zionist teachers and students throughout the U.S. The school bosses in the D.C. area attacked teachers in Montgomery County (CHALLENGE, 1/17) and Anne Arundel County with suspensions, "investigations" and hearings while lawsuits and protests continue in response. Organizing among teachers and supporters in an ad hoc group, "Solidarity Not Silence," we shared petitions and information about upcoming protests at the Board of Education. The bold PLP banner proclaimed "Anti-Fascism is not Anti-Semitism" and "Workers of the World Unite." Our flier stated clearly, "U.S. Imperialism Drives Fascist Attacks on Teachers and Students." Unions must openly proclaim support for the teachers and call for strikes and walkouts, if necessary.

The local Montgomery County Education Association (MCEA), a chapter of the NEA, has not called for a ceasefire and is dragging its feet on even allowing a resolution to be presented. At the last meeting, PLP members were able to raise the issue during open mic and have been scheduled to present the resolution next month. But this will not be easy, as Zionists in the Maryland community have already proved their willingness to use repressive means to shut down anti-Zionist teachers.

Fighting Zionism in the classroom

At another level of struggle, we have learned that

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SCAN ME

OUR FIGHT

Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.
While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

CHALLENGE/DESAFIO (ISSN 0009-1049) published bi-weekly by Challenge Periodicals. 1 issue $1. One Year: $20. Six months: $15. Send address changes to CHALLENGE Periodicals, GPO Box 808 Brooklyn, NY 11202
February 28 2024 • Volume 56 No. 5

Editorial

Argentina: Imperialist rivalry means workers' misery

In late January, in another sign of the international crisis of capitalism, masses of workers handed U.S.-friendly Argentinian President Javier Milei a humiliating defeat. More than 1.5 million workers joined a national strike against Milei's "omnibus" austerity reform bill, a vicious attack on the working class. After four days of militant fightback in the streets, Milei's administration was forced to withdraw the bill (Truthout, 2/7).

As Argentina continues to whiplash between rightwing and fake-left misleaders, the third largest economy in Latin America is a vivid illustration of how voting and reforms will never bring workers the world we need. Only a revolutionary mass communist party—Progressive Labor Party—will finally put an end to the terrors of capitalism.

Capitalism=unending misery for workers

Under the dictatorship of Juan Peron after World War Two, Argentina welcomed hundreds of Nazis to build a fascist movement in Argentina. Peron also put in a wave of reforms, including pensions and subsidized electricity, to pacify revolutionary activity and set up the working class for decades of future misery.

In the worldwide capitalist crisis of the 1990s, Argentina was hit hard and never recovered. The richest 10 percent in Argentina now control 60 percent of the wealth (Buenos Aires Times, 1/28), and the country's poverty rate exceeds 40 percent (BBC, 1/29)—including more than eight million children. In 2023, inflation soared to 211 percent, its highest rate in 32 years, leaving workers with pesos that are next to worthless (NBC News, 1/11/24).

Over the past twenty years, conditions in Argentina's notorious favelas have gotten even worse for workers who have nowhere else to live. Many search through landfills to find scrap to build flimsy houses—or even food to bring back and cook (BBC, 6/26/22). That's capitalism in a nutshell, a system where workers are forced to search through garbage for their next meal. Under communism, we will ensure all workers have adequate housing and healthy food available, according to their need.

China gaining in U.S. "backyard"

U.S. dominance in Latin America faced little competition until the late 1990s and early 2000s, when the U.S.-dominated International Monetary Fund (IMF) forced a series of widely unpopular austerity cutbacks. That left an opening for China, which has made loans totaling $138 billion to Latin America and the Caribbean (Wilson Center, 9/23). From 2005 to 2019, around 40 percent of Chinese investment in South America went into Argentina (Council of Foreign Relations, 2/5)—making it no surprise when Argentina joined China's international infrastructure project, the Belt and Road Initiative, in 2022. The struggle between U.S. and Chinese imperialism is forcing smaller capitalist bosses to choose a side.

Under Milei, Argentina has shifted its policy away from China and back toward the United States. Milei recently cancelled Argentina's planned entry into BRICS, the China-led alliance with Brazil, Russia, India, and South Africa (AP, 12/29/23). He went so far as to call Chinese leaders "thieves" and "murderers" and has pushed for doing more business with "the U.S., Israel and other countries that defend freedom" (Financial Times, 2/6).

Rising facism in Argentina

Not so long ago, U.S. imperialism had unchecked control over most of the world. Today, however, their influence is degrading with every deal another country signs with China. While the U.S. and China battle it out for world supremacy, smaller countries are being pulled into the rising tide of fascism, and Argentina is no exception. As Milei and his group of "free market" capitalists struggle to build closer ties with the U.S. and wean the country off dependence on Chinese imperialism, they must try to smash worker fightback as well as disagreements within their own class.

After Milei took office on December 10, he eliminated half of the government's 18 ministries and promised to cut subsidies and privatize state-owned companies. For "moving "quickly and decisively" to "restore macroeconomic stability," the IMF rewarded the new administration by agreeing to resume payouts (The Economist, 1/14). Since then, however, the Donald Trump admirer has encountered significant obstacles in implementing his big initiatives.

On December 27, Milei submitted the omnibus bill that would allow him to rule by decree for two years--and encountered stiff resistance from Argentina's Congress (Reuters, 2/6). He's been forced to back off from his campaign promise to scrap Argentina's peso and replace it with the U.S. dollar. While Milei has rejected China's offer to finance Argentina's $43 billion debt to the IMF, and is pushing instead to pay off the debt by terrorizing workers through austerity cuts (Financial Times, 11/11/24), his pivot to the U.S. may not be so easy to achieve. Argentina still has contracts with China for lithium mining and soybean sales (Reuters, 12/7/23). Many of the country's bosses see China as an economic lifeline. They know they desperately need to avoid another credit default (Atlantic Council, 11/3).

To rebuild Argentina's ties to the U.S. in such a volatile period, Milei has no choice but to intensify his attacks on the working class. His omnibus bill would force workers to opt into boss-controlled unions and imprison protest organizers for six years. The president is also pushing for mass layoffs, massive privatization, and huge cuts to government services and subsidies (The Economist, 1/14). For Milei and the capitalist bosses he represents, fascism is not an option—it's a necessity.

As Chinese imperialism grows stronger, some workers may find comfort in China's challenge to U.S. dominance. But we must be clear: All capitalist bosses stand for mass exploitation, for rising fascism, and for building toward the next world war.

Workers must build revolutionary leadership

While we applaud the bold protesters in Argentina, workers cannot rely on short-term reforms. Even if the current fightback delays or dilutes the bosses' next round of attacks, liberal misleaders will leave the working class unprepared to face even sharper attacks down the line. Nothing short of building a communist movement, led by Progressive Labor Party, will serve workers' long-term interests.

Capitalism inevitably breeds inter-imperialist rivalry. In Argentina, neither Chinese nor U.,S. imperialism will bring anything but fascism and disaster for the working class. We must build a revolutionary communist movement that destroys capitalism once and for all.

Power to the youth protesting genocidal system

Ceasefire is not enough! Youth from Gaza to New Jersey need an end to the genocidal capitalist system and a communist future

CHICAGO, January 30—"Same enemy, same fight — Students of Chicago unite!" It was with this chant and many others that hundreds of multiracial, multigender public high school students led a bold walkout and sit-in today at City Hall in protest of the ongoing genocide against workers and children in Gaza. Their efforts were the result of a brilliant organizing effort across more than ten schools in different neighborhoods.

The inspiring action occurred just the day before the Chicago City Council was set to vote on whether to officially endorse a ceasefire resolution. But as history and current experience show, the capitalist politicians' timid calls for an end to the slaughter will do little to nothing to stop the current genocide or the inevitable next one that grows out like a cancer from their blood-soaked profit system.

To transform these exploding imperialist bloodbaths into class war and our collective liberation, we need an international communist revolution and nothing less. Those of us in the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) salute these students for their urgency, anti-racism, and internationalism, and invite them to join the revolutionary movement to crush the parasitic exploiters and their system once and for all.

Youth protest genocidal capitalism

As the clock struck midday, the students at the specific schools poured out of the buildings. At one of the schools on the city's southwest side, the daughter of a PLP member helped to lead her peers in marching and chants around the campus. She also gave leadership to the planning efforts with other student leaders from different schools before today's action.

In the majority working-class neighborhood where the school is located, neighbors and those driving past vocalized their support. The students proudly waved signs with messages like "End the Genocide" and "The occupation has to go!" They used bullhorns to give speeches that connected the state-sponsored racist attacks against Black and Brown youth in Chicago from forces like the KKKops to the U.S. imperialist-backed Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) currently murdering Arab workers and youth.

Later in the afternoon, the bulk of the students walking out converged in the city's downtown at City Hall. After marching around the block and shutting down busy intersections, they forced their way into the government building despite a heavy kkkop presence and took over the entire first floor. Most of the students eagerly took copies of CHALLENGE newspaper and shared their sharp insights into the nature of the system.

The same young organizer leading the walkout at her school continued while at City Hall, pushing the chants to have a more anti-capitalist tone, including "Democrats, Republicans, all the same – Genocide is the name of the game!" and "From Palestine to Mexico, these border walls have got to go!"

She also gave one of the more militant speeches during the sit-in:

"Today we are here to stand for the Palestinian people and demand an end to the genocide and the system that causes it, and that is capitalism. Local government and especially our city council has failed to support Palestinians and instead, they are supporting this racist government to continue the mass genocide. How many more kids need to die? How many more need to fear for their lives? The answer should be zero but there are over 27,000 Palestinian people who have died over land and capitalism.

This doesn't just affect Palestine; it affects the world. The working class is suffering because the ruling class controls the government and therefore the military is killing our people. The government is supposed to uplift our lives but they're serving their bosses and killing our people! They're killing our people to put money into their pockets. They're benefitting from this mass genocide. We need to use our voice as youth to begin this revolution and breakthrough capitalism! People are suffering, people are dying – Innocent people, innocent children! We demand a ceasefire!"

Reject liberal misleaders, fight for communism

Our collective ability to end exploitation and profit wars is ultimately a question of armed class struggle and state power. The liberals and so-called "progressive" politicians like Mayor Brandon Johnson use radical-sounding language to pretend like they're on our side while they are managers of the very same profit system responsible for so much racism, nationalism, misery, and war. They are the class enemies who will tell these working-class youth to ultimately get in line to fight and die for the imperialist war machine in the next world war. That's why we in PLP identify liberals as the main danger to our class!

As communists in the international PLP, we want to arm our youth and the working masses with the ideas and weapons that will violently seize power away from the capitalists and build a society based on our collective needs and development. A gigantic goal, but ultimately the only future worth fighting for!

NJ Students lead!

‘From Palestine to Mexico, the war machine has got to go’

New Jersey, February 14—Students throughout New Jersey coordinated a student walk out in protest of the genocide in Gaza. From West Orange to Teaneck, workers and students are exposing a hub of racist Zionists and the true intentions of City Council members—to squelch anti-imperialist, antiracist rebellion and realize their dreams of Mayoral and Senator elections. Progressive Labor Party members were in attendance at these walkouts, with signs and CHALLENGE in hand to encourage our collective revolutionary potential.

In Teaneck, one PL’er held up a sign that read, “THE PRIORITIES OF US IMPERIALISM: 27,947 KILLED IN GAZA IS ACCEPTABLE! A 20 PERCENT DROP IN RED SEA TRAFFIC IS NOT.”

Many workers and students at the march complimented the sign. When they did, the comrade would say, “If you like my sign, you’ll also like this paper” and hand them a CHALLENGE. A former Teaneck High School student said, "Yes,I'll take one—I am a communist!" And she proceeded to use the front cover as her sign while marching.

In West Orange, students chanted as they marched from the school grounds **“ FROM PALESTINE TO MEXICO, THE WAR MACHINE HAS GOT TO GO!**” Another PLer was able to share a chant with the students, “BIDEN BIDEN COME NOVEMBER, ALL THE VOTERS WILL REMEMBER.” Self critically, it would be stronger to alter this chant to say WORKERS instead of VOTERS but this was an opportunity to open up a conversation with students about Biden being a liberal President and sanctioning aid to Israel despite their mass murdering and bomb dropping. “I’m not going to vote for Biden in November.” One 17 year old Black student shared to the crowd. Another Indian student commented, “Biden is okay funding Israel because he doesn’t want to be at war with the Houthis in Yemen and Hezbollah in Lebanon.” Stunned, I told him yes, many of my friends would and I say that Israel is an acting watchdog for the U.S. in the Middle East.

We were able to share CHALLENGE and exchange contact information with this student and his older sister, who is a student at Rutgers. More work in exposing these students to a third option — building under the banner of PLP with revolutionary communism is being planned through an upcoming forum. With capitalism, there will always be a path to imperialist wars including World War 3, Biden and ALL the International Bosses will pull out all genocidal stops to gain power or to hold onto power.

Fight vs. NYC retiree healthcare cuts grows

NEW YORK CITY, February 12—In Washington, the stumbling, bumbling racist politicians of the DemoPublican bosses' parties argue about how much to cut benefits for workers, how much to spend on a military budget to try to hold onto their empire, how to attack immigrants fleeing intolerable conditions in their country of birth and how to end the federal Medicare health plan as it has been run for the last sixty years. Progressive Labor Party (PLP) says don’t be fooled by the bosses' system and their ideas. We fight against the bosses’ plans and for a new egalitarian society run by workers to meet the needs of workers, that’s communism!

Capitalism puts profits above worker’s health

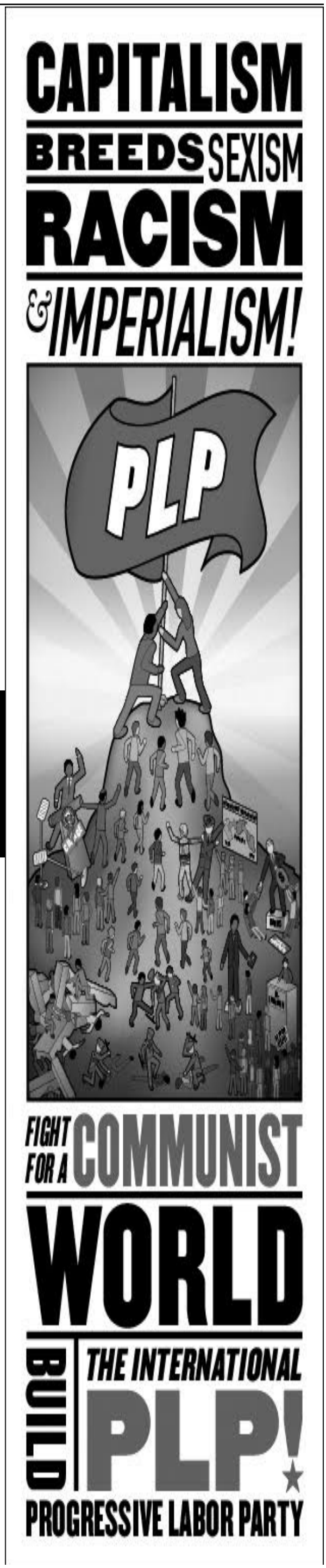
Here in New York City, workers are not passive in the face of the bosses and union honchos’ plans. For the last three years, retired New York City municipal workers have been fighting against a plan agreed to by the city government and the Municipal Labor Committee (MLC),an umbrella group of over 100 unions that have collective bargaining rights for current city workers) that force retirees out of traditional Medicare health coverage and into a so-called Medicare “Advantage” plan run by one of the health insurance corporate giants. Retirees have fought this plan because it would narrow our ability to use some doctors and medical facilities, impose preauthorization requirements that have been shown to deny or delay needed medical procedures and tests that cost more money. New copays would hit lower-income retired workers (who are disproportionately Black, Latin, and women retirees) the hardest, making this plan a racist and sexist one. The reality of healthcare in the U.S. is that more and more working folks are forced to make the unthinkable choice between paying for housing, food, healthcare, or prescription medicine. Amid this struggle, PLP members have pointed out that under capitalism, the healthcare system is always designed to make profits for the healthcare bosses, not to guarantee the best health outcomes for the working class. That’s why PLP builds for a communist revolution.

The fightback is spreading

For the last two years, the Medicare grassroots retiree organization has pursued a legal challenge that stopped the NYC Medicare (dis)advantage plan in its tracks. Now retirees have been placing ads in various print and online media outlets signed by 4,000 retired union leaders, staff, members, and organizers. The ads attempt to show that this fight is directed against fat cat MLC leaders who act as agents of the bosses rather than leaders of the fight for workers.

Now this struggle is spreading as retired NYC transit workers from TWU Local 100 have begun a similar fight against their boss, the NYC Transit Authority. In addition, government workers in the state of Delaware have stopped a Medicare (dis)Advantage plan there and workers in Illinois, Vermont and Washington State are joining the struggle. PLP members have said that the attack on retirees will sooner rather than later lead to healthcare cuts on current NYC government workers. Now, the MLC is currently in backroom negotiations which we predict will restrict healthcare options and impose additional costs for 350,00 current workers.

Fighting back and not passively listening to bosses’ politicians or pro boss union hacks is a good thing. However, as long as capitalist bosses are in control, every victory we win is temporary. That’s why workers need to join the PLP and fight for communist revolution!



Angry antiracists march for workers in Gaza

To defeat the monster Israeli-U.S. war machine we need an international, multiracial, working class red army for communist revolution.

New York City, February 12—As Israel prepares to massacre thousands more Palestinians in Rafah, on top of the 28,000 already killed, angry protests are building in New York City and around the world. Rafah is the southernmost city in Gaza, where civilians had been instructed to flee, and now the more than one million civilians there are being attacked. The lack of food and clean water is killing thousands more due to starvation and disease. The U.S. government is supplying the weapons and still defending Israel's genocidal policies.

Last Friday hundreds gathered in front of the Brooklyn Museum and on Monday hundreds met at Union Square in Manhattan and then marched through the city for hours. The police have continually escalated their violence, sometimes charging into the loud but peaceful crowds and pulling someone out for arrest. They are also grabbing speakers and leaders and others who may be on or off the sidewalk or street as an arbitrary excuse to intimidate marchers. But it won't work because there is too much anger at the mass murder in Gaza.

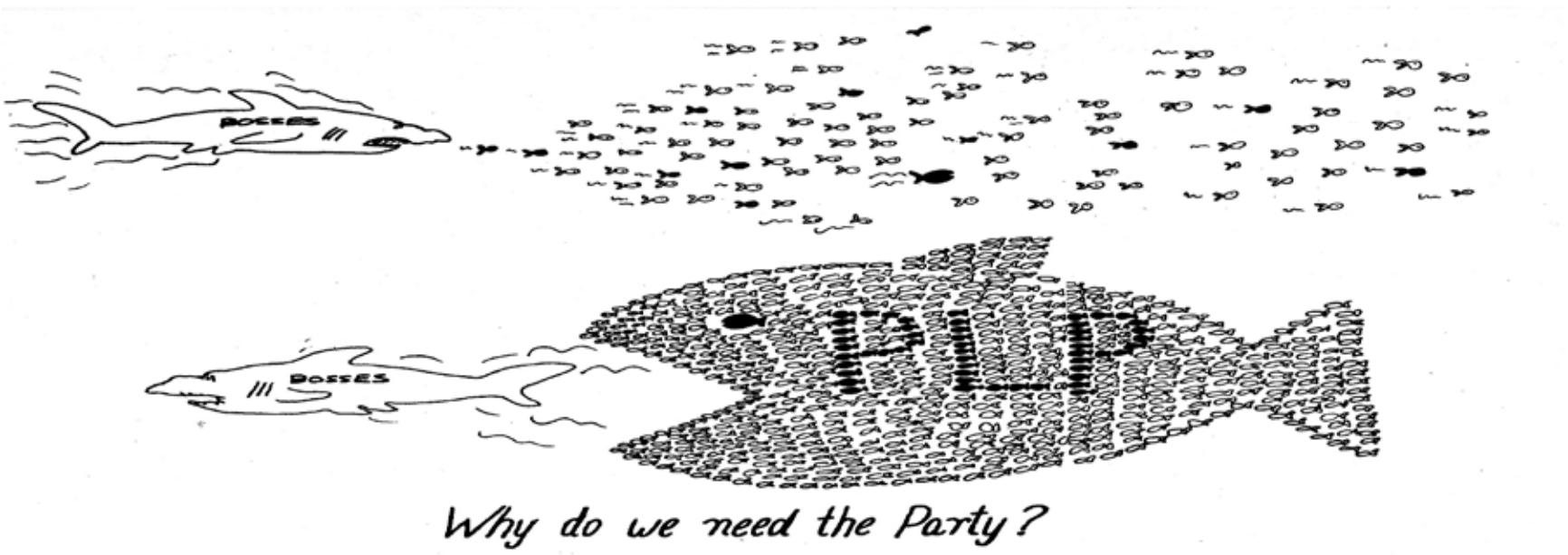
These demonstrations were heavily Muslim; others have been mainly anti-Zionist Jews. What is needed is unity, not only of these groups but of a broader swath of workers and students. Even more essential is a focus on a class analysis of worldwide capitalist and imperialist murder and the need to build an international working-class communist movement. The few million Palestinians, who have no pro-worker leaders, cannot defeat the Israeli-American monster unless they are allied with workers in other countries, even some Israelis, in an anti-capitalist struggle. Progressive Labor Party members have distributed hundreds of CHALLENGEs and had some good conversations, and we must continue to mobilize our friends and organizations to build this struggle .

DC educators march against genocide

Continued from page 1

the school bosses are determined to block the history of Palestine and the role of U.S. imperialism. They go along with Zionist tirades accusing all opponents of Israel's military actions of anti-semitism. They betray educators and block factual instruction. Just as U.S. history instruction lied about slavery and Jim Crow, so the current "history" of Israel and Palestine being offered in classrooms omits the history of the Nakba and the forcible displacement of over a million Palestinians. Approved teaching materials in Anne Arundel County state that "Gaza is a hard place to live. About half of the Gazans don't have jobs, electricity goes out frequently and the tap water is polluted. Palestinians in Gaza cannot leave the territory without permission. This makes it extremely difficult to leave the country to work, study, or visit family." Who is doing this to the Palestinians? The man on the moon? No! The "approved" article is silent on the fact that Israel controls all the supplies entering Palestine (such as water and electricity) and that it is Israel that makes it difficult for workers in Palestine to travel or live a normal life. Moreover, no material from the United Nations, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, or any other major human rights group, let alone alternative media such as Al-Jazeera or Middle East Eye, is allowed in classroom assignments and discussions. So much for "balance!"

As the battle continues, teachers need to form a stronger group in the union to resist these attacks, learn more about the history of the Palestinian struggle by reading CHALLENGE and recent entries in the multiracialunity.org blog, and demand that suspended teachers be returned to the classroom immediately. Through this process, more teachers can become part of the revolutionary movement for communism and put imperialism (from Queen Victoria to Genocide Joe) in a museum where it belongs.



LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Harlem

This past November, we resumed monthly political meetings in Harlem. We are organizing against Mayor Eric Adams' police harassment and fighting for adequate low-income housing for ALL residents and immigrants. We are also joining the Episcopal Peace Fellowship to fight against genocide in Gaza and the West Bank and to fight to end the Occupation, end military funding for Israel, and for a permanent cease-fire. We are organizing to send church and community people to all pro-Palestinian actions in NYC.

In our town, we are joining all demonstrations in support of Palestinians and demanding a cease-fire, ending the occupation, and ending all military funding for Israel. We organize to support a Jewish and Muslim dialogue. and work to involve high school students in it. Also, my grandson just went with his high school group to tour the Holocaust museum in D.C. and I am encouraging him to organize his friends who went (and other students) into a study group about the roots of fascism and how to fight it!

I am leading an online book group discussing "The 1619 Project" and examining what kinds of activism its analysis can suggest for our congregation's Social Action Committee.

Don't use 'ethnic cleansing'

A recent CHALLENGE editorial spoke about horrific mass murder and ethnic cleansing being carried out in Gaza by the Israeli ruling class. It was an excellent editorial - like the rest of the paper too - offering a breath of fresh air, in contrast to all the deadly nationalism underlying the mass murder in Gaza, and also mistakenly upheld by some people participating in the current, widespread protests against that killing.

However, I think we should always refrain from using the expression: ethnic cleansing. The word cleansing, as we know, means to clean. But there's absolutely nothing clean or positive about genocide. The expression - ethnic cleansing - embodies the intolerable ideology of racists who commit genocide. Let's not give them an inch, not politically, not militarily, and not linguistically.

Struggling against nationalist ideas in the movement

Some of us from the Progressive Labor Party went to a Boston Teachers Union teach-in, "Anti-Zionism and Anti-Semitism." Since the teach-in, I've been thinking about the complexities of raising our line within a movement that's strongly impacted by nationalism and liberalism.

The movement takes aim at Israel as a settler colonial state rather than as a capitalist (fascist) state, capitalism being at the root of all types of colonialism and imperialism. Settler colonialism is when a colonial power claims the land, not just the resources and labor of an exploited people. This form of colonialism leads to racism and genocide, like what the British and then the U.S. did to Native Americans. But is this worse than "plain old colonialism," which morphed into imperialism in the 20th century? Both continue to oppress, displace, and murder workers all over the world, for example in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Central America, Haiti, and Sudan. Workers in these places all suffer the brutality of imperialism.

When the concept of globalization became popular in the 1990's, it seemed to reflect new realities in the world making the Leninist concept of imperialism irrelevant. Playing with words in this way is what liberals do when they don't want to embrace a Marxist analysis. But Marxism-Leninism is necessary for understanding the world today and all its interconnections and necessary because it leads us to a revolutionary solution.

Because of its nationalism, the revisionist left plays up ethnic identity and plays down class. It refuses to condemn capitalism for fear of sounding like Marxists. Their fixation on settler colonialism reinforces the obsession with land that seems to be at the heart of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. They also embrace self-determination for Palestinians (and everyone else) which is also the justification for a Jewish state (self determination for Jews). This places the conflict within the capitalist framework of nationhood and avoids the all-important question of what class the state serves. For the working class, winning your own state (i.e.nationalism) means changing the color/ethnicity of your oppressors, not liberation.

Self determination (embodied in the chant "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free") assumes that one's "self" is primarily one's ethnicity, religion, or gender rather than one's class. It's another expression of identity politics. These things are real and important to many people, but when you think of what mainly determines our condition of life, it is our class. The capitalist propaganda machine pulls the wool over our eyes in order to keep the working class divided. Self determination didn't solve the problems of workers in South Africa, Algeria, Vietnam or scores of other countries in the world when they fought off the colonial oppressors any more than it will solve the problem of workers in Palestine.

Despite our ethnicity or religion or gender, workers suffer from the same capitalist economy that seeks short-term profits above all else and results in high prices, low wages, the marketing of products that harm our lives (for example processed food and pharmaceuticals), racism and sexism. During Covid-19, we were all subject to the same dysfunctional, self-serving capitalist class that put profits over people's lives.

Capitalist brainwashing causes most people to perceive the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a clash of cultures, rather than a conflict engineered by the imperialist powers to secure their oil interests in the Middle East. With the capitalists controlling the narrative, it seems as though Palestinians and Israelis hate each other because they both want to live on the same land, which fits right into the current movement's single-minded focus on "settler colonialism." For those of us working within this movement, we must counter the nationalist chants with the class conscious chant, "Arab, Jewish, Black, and white, workers of the world unite".

As horrible as wars are, they create opportunities to politicize the working class. They make people want to take a stand and think more deeply about society. Why shouldn't we build a movement that is anti-capitalist? The working class is ready for it!! Why shouldn't workers start thinking about the road to real liberation rather than stay mired in capitalist solutions?

Chant in solidarity with workers in Gaza

How do you spell fascists? IDF
How do you spell murderers? IDF

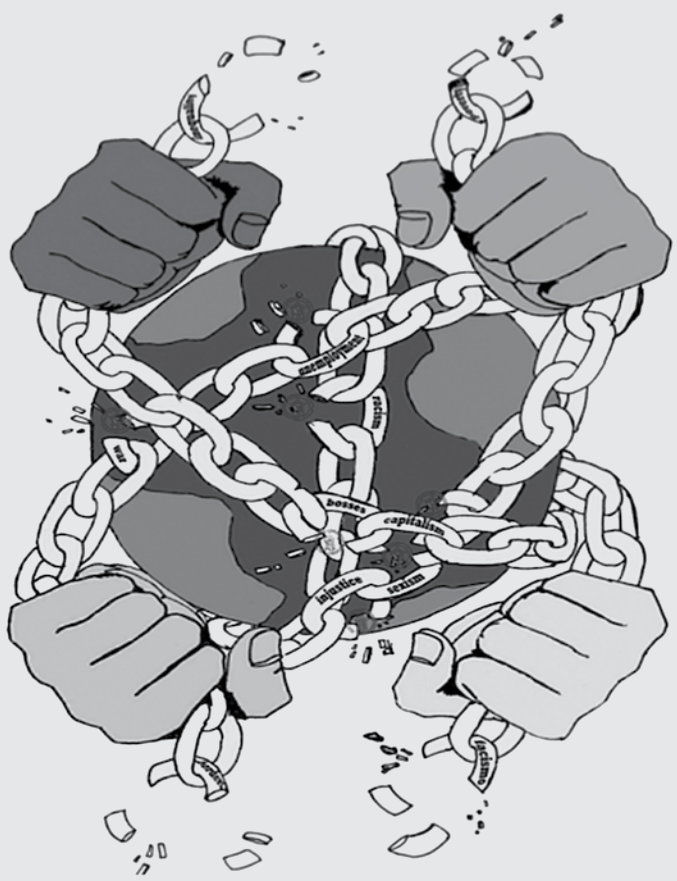
Hey, hey, ho, ho!
The occupation has got to go!

Joe Biden, you can't hide!
We charge you with genocide

They are killing kids overseas...
Shut it down!
They're killing kids in our streets...
Shut it down!
They're getting killed by bombs...
Shut it down!
They're getting killed by police...
Shut it down!
If they keep bombing...
Shut it down!
This racist system
Shut it down!
This genocidal system
Shut it down!
This capitalist system
Shut it down!
Shut this racist system down!

U.S., Israel hand in hand
racist murder is the bosses' plan,

From Palestine to Mexico
The bosses borders, got to go!



The Fight to Free the Scottsboro Boys

Pictured :the nine innocent Black youth known as the Scottsboro boys faced a lengthy road to freedom, but were finally exonerated in 1946 thanks to the tireless fightback of thousands of antiracist workers and communists around the world.

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The fight to defend the Scottsboro Boys involved several thousands of people around the world. The ILD organized mass meetings where family members of the wrongly convicted young men would speak alongside members of the ILD.

Bosses Counter with Terror

The Southern bosses were terrified of this multiracial movement against lynchings and responded with a campaign of terror against Black and white supporters of the campaign. Along with the physical terror carried out by the Klan, a campaign of anti-communism was launched to scare workers away from the fight to save the Scottsboro Boys.

The anticommunist campaign took several forms. The kkkops arrested people, and beat people suspected of being supporters of the ILD. Black and white women were arrested and threatened with rape by the police. The bosses' press spread anti-communism.

The Birmingham Labor Advocate warned its readers to beware of outside agitators who, "under the cover of darkness," disseminated "Red literature preaching free love [and] inter marriage.(Hammer and Hoe)

The local NAACP was reluctant to help defend the working-class youth. But a whole year after the arrests, one of the women accusers of rape came forward and admitted there was no rape and that the police had forced her into lying. This created an upsurge in anger about the case and the NAACP finally joined the ILD in the campaign to free the young men.

In spite of the beatings, jailings and threats, the ILD kept both the mass campaign and the legal fight going by organizing meetings, rallies and raising money to pay legal fees and other expenses for the families of the Scottsboro Boys.

'The All-Southern Scottsboro and Civil Rights Conference was one such mass meeting that went on in spite of Klan and police intimidation. In the days prior to the conference Klansmen organized a twenty-car motorcade through the Black community and distributed leaflets that read "Communism Will Not Be Tolerated."

Nonetheless some three hundred Blacks and fifty whites packed the meeting room and between 500 and 1000 were turned away because of lack of space and by the military presence of the police who stationed eighty cops equipped with three machine guns in posts across the street from the hall.

...As Hosea Hudson [a Black communist and labour leader in Deep South] recalled many stood up to the intimidation. "[People] just walked all under them rifles, just went on in the door and on to the meeting." (Hammer and Hoe)

The fight to free the railroaded young men took many years. Charges were finally dropped for four of the nine defendants. Sentences for the rest ranged from 75 years to death. All but two served prison sentences; all were free by 1946.

You Cannot Kill the Working Class

Angelo Herndon, a Black communist labour organizer, summed up the significance of the struggle in his essay entitled "You Cannot Kill the Working Class."

If you know the South as I do, you know what the Scottsboro case means. Here were the landlords in their fine plantation homes, and the big white bosses in their city mansions, and the whole brutal force of [private security] and police who do their bidding. There they sat, smug and self-satisfied, and oh, so sure that nothing could ever interfere with them and their ways. For all time they would be able to sweat and cheat the [Black] people, and jail and frame and lynch and shoot them, as they pleased.

And all of a sudden someone laid a hand on their arm and said: "STOP." It was a great big' hand, a powerful hand, the hand of the workers. The bosses were shocked and horrified and scared. I know that. And I know also that after the fight began for the Scottsboro boys, every [Black] worker in mill or mine, every [Black] cropper on the Black Belt plantations, breathed a little easier and held his head a little higher.

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Bosses in Pakistan battle for control

NY Times, 2/10–The party of the imprisoned former prime minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, won the most seats in parliamentary elections this week, delivering a strong rebuke to the country's powerful generals and throwing the political system into chaos...Never before in the country's history has a politician seen such success in an election without the backing of the generals — much less after facing their iron fist.

The success of Mr. Khan's party was a head-spinning upset in an election that the military thought would be an easy victory for Mr. Sharif...Pakistan's powerful generals had jailed Mr. Khan, arrested candidates allied with him and intimidated his supporters to clear his party from the playing field — or so they thought... the military has wielded ultimate authority, guiding its politics behind a veil of secrecy, and civilian leaders have typically risen to power only with its support...The vote also showed that Mr. Khan's strategy of preaching reform and railing against the military has resonated deeply with Pakistanis...

FBI and ATF enter fight for fascism in Atlanta

The Guardian, 2/10–Police in Georgia, together with federal agencies, are conducting a crackdown on activists involved in a continuing campaign against a controversial police and fire department training center known as "Cop City" that has included acts of arson and sabotage against equipment being used on the project.

This week alone saw Atlanta-area raids by law enforcement that took a woman out of her house with no shirt, left a naked photo of another woman on display after ransacking a room and dragged a man by his hair – while arresting none of them...The fight against Cop City has attracted national and global headlines, especially after police shot and killed one environmental protester at a campsite in a public park – the first such incident of its kind in US history. At least one of the search warrants for Thursday's raid...authorized the FBI to confiscate dozens of items from the raided homes – including laptops, cellphones, "Defend the Atlanta Forest" stickers and posters, and personal journals.

Israeli bosses continue the slaughter of children in expanding empire

Al Jazeera, 2/10–The Israeli military has killed at least 28 Palestinians in strikes on Rafah immediately after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu signaled that an invasion of the city in southern Gaza may be close...As with many previous Israeli air raids, each attack reportedly killed multiple members of three families, including a total of 10 children, the youngest of whom was only three months old. This came hours after Netanyahu said he had ordered the military to plan for the evacuation of hundreds of thousands of forcibly displaced Palestinians from Rafah in preparation for a ground invasion to accompany the air attacks...Israel's invasion of Gaza has killed at least about 28,000 Palestinians, most of them women and children, with thousands more missing, likely remaining under rubble.

Battle for minerals drives instability in DRC

BBC, 2/11–Emile Bolingo is not sure how long he and other residents of Goma, in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo, can hold out. This major city in the region, with about two million people, has been cut off from the farms that feed it for several days. It is the latest episode in a resurgence of fighting that has seen tens of thousands added to the nearly seven million who have been forced from their homes in the country because of multiple conflicts. Rebels from the ethnic Tutsi-led M23 movement are blocking the two main roads into Goma from the north and the west, preventing produce from getting through...Within reach of major mining towns supplying metals and minerals in high demand such as gold, tin, and coltan, Goma has become a vital economic hub. Its road and air transport links, and the fact that it has a huge UN peacekeeping base, have attracted a host of businesses, international organizations, and diplomatic consulates.

BLACK AND RED, THE UNTOLD HISTORY PART I

THE FIGHT TO FREE THE SCOTTSBORO BOYS

History has segregated the fight against racism and the fight for an egalitarian system, communism. In reality, the two were connected like flesh and bone. Many antiracist struggles were led by, initiated by, or were fought with communists and communist-influenced organizations. Many Black fighters were also dedicated communists and pro-communists of their time.

In turn, the bosses have used anti-communism as a tool to terrorize and divide antiracist fightback. Regardless of communist affiliation, anyone who fought racism was at risk of being redbaited. Why? 1) The ruling class understands the natural relationship between antiracism and communism, and 2) Multiracial unity threatens the very racist system the bosses "work so hard" to maintain.

Below is part I of a series aimed at reuniting the history of communism with antiracism. Robin D.G. Kelley's book Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression, excerpted throughout this piece, is a good supplement for those who would like to find out more. This series originally ran in May 2017 (volume 49 no.11), and in this period of increasing nationalism and liberal fascism, it's worth revisiting again!

Rallying for Scottsboro boys in front of White House in 1933 ,
Black workers led antiracist fightback against state sponsored lynchings.

In the years after slavery, Southern U.S. bosses used racist terror in the form of the Ku Klux Klan, police beatings, and lynching, legal and extralegal, to keep Black workers oppressed and as a source of cheap labor to drive down the wages of all workers Black and white.

Robin D.G. Kelley in Hammer and Hoe described it as the following:

> *White supremacist groups [including the KKK] organized by some of [Birmingham's] leading citizens...enjoyed huge numerical and financial support...Klansmen [through intimidation and violence] sought to cleanse their city of Jews, Catholics, labor agitators, and recalcitrant African-Americans who refused to accept "their place" in the hierarchy of race*

The Southern bosses police and kangaroo courts (sham legal proceedings) were the heart of this injustice system.

"Fear [of the Southern injustice system] came from the knowledge that the color of your skin made you a suspect—a suspect that looked just like the prime suspect--every time the police were looking for a black man." (WNYC 2//1/2013)

When workers united and fought back against this terror, the bosses often used racism and anti-communism to try to divide the working class.

The Scottsboro Boys

On March 25, 1931 nine Black teenagers age 13 to 19 were pulled from a freight car near Paint Rock, Alabama and charged with raping two white women.

Within three days, the young men were tried by an all-white jury, convicted and sentenced to death. A lynch mob gathered at the jail in Scottsboro, demanding the young men be turned over to the racist rioters.

Courthouse lynchings like this were common for Black workers and youth living in the Jim Crow south. So common in fact that the local branch of The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the other misleader organizations, focused on helping small business owners, didn't even respond to the case.

Communists, First Responders

One organization did respond, the International Labor Defense (ILD), a workers' defense organization initiated by the Communist Party. ILD was made up of communist and non-communist workers, Black and white. Within days of the sham trial, the ILD set up a defense committee, obtained lawyers for the nine young men on death row and built the defense of the Scottsboro Boys into a worldwide cause that saved them from the electric chair and after a many years-long battle eventually won their freedom.

Tired
by Langston Hughes

I am so tired of waiting,
Aren't you,
For the world to become good
And beautiful and kind?
Let us take a knife
And cut the world in two-
And see what worms
are eating
At the rind.

Continued on page 7

WRITE FOR CHALLENGE!

CHALLENGE strives to be the communist paper for and by the international working class. We call on all readers, supporters, and comrades to submit class struggle articles, analytical pieces, original photos and graphics, letters, and political cartoons.

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